

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: PGOV, GR

SUBJECT: GOG SUBMITS AMMENDED DRAFT CONSTITUTION TO
PARLIAMENT

REF: ATHENS 9090, DECEMBER 24, 1974

1. SUMMARY: CARAMANLIS ADMINISTRATION SUBMITTED TO
PARLIAMENT JANUARY 7 DRAFT CONSTITUTION WITH CERTAIN CHANGES
PARTIALLY RESPONSIVE TO OPPOSITION OBJECTIONS. CARAMANLIS
REITERATED GOG POSITION THAT NEW CONSTITUTION SAFEGUARDS
FUNDAMENTAL DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND ADDED THAT HE HAS
NO PERSONAL AMBITIONS, ALTHOUGH HE HAS RIGHT TO SEEK ELECTION
AS PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC WHICH IS HIS CONCERN ALONE AND NOT
MATTER FOR POLITICAL OPPOSITION. OPPOSITION LEADERS
CRITICIZED AGAIN EXTENT OF PRESIDENTIAL POWERS AND SAID NEW
DRAFT VIOLATED TENET OF POPULAR WILL. ONE-DAY PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATE ON DRAFT CONSTITUTION DURING WHICH POLITICAL
PARTIES SET FORTH BASIC POSITIONS WILL MOVE FOR NEXT
40 DAYS TO PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRED
BY C. TSATSOS. END SUMMARY.

2. GOG ANNOUNCED JANUARY 7 THAT CABINET CHAIRED BY
PM CARAMANLIS APPROVED SEVEN MAJOR AMENDMENTS TO DRAFT
CONSTITUTION SHOWING ADMINISTRATION'S GOODWILL TO ENGAGE
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IN CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE. SEVEN AMENDMENTS ARE:

DEPORTATION TO BE CARRIED OUT BY COURT RULING, WORKERS RIGHT TO STRIKE TO SAFEGUARD FINANCIAL AND GENERAL WORKING INTERESTS, SHORTENING PARLIAMENT'S TERM FROM FIVE TO FOUR YEARS, PERMITTING PARLIAMENT TO DETERMINE VOTING AGE, DELETING PHRASE THAT PRESS PERFORMS "SOCIAL MISSION," REWORDING PROVISION ON HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO ALLOW PROGRESSIVE REFORMS, AND MAKING GREEKS BORN IN ANNEXED AREAS ELIGIBLE TO STAND FOR PRESIDNET, OPPOSITION PARTIES ACKNOWLEDGED THAT CHANGES IN DRAFT REPRESENTED IMPROVEMENT BUT ASSERTED BASIC ISSUE OF EXTENT OF PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITY REMAINED.

3. GOEROGHE MAVORS, CU/NF LEADER, ANTICIPATED PLENARY DEBATE JANUARY 8 BY ANNOUNCING PREVIOUS DAY THAT DRAFT SUBMITTED BY GOVERNMENT WAS UNACCEPTABLE, PARTICULARLY SINCE ADOPTION OF DRAFT BY MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT AND SUBSEQUENT ELECTION OF PRESIDNET BY SAME MAJORITY WOULD SHOW THAT DRAFT HAD BEEN TAILORED TO SUIT A SPECIFIC PERSON. MAVORS SAID PRESIDENT'S POWERS SHOULD CHANGE HIS STATUS FROM "UNCONTROLLED EXECUTOR OF POWER" TO AN ELEMENT REGULATING POLITICAL LIFE. EX-PM P. KANELLOPOULOS ALSO MADE STATEMENT IN ANTICIPATION OF PARLIAMENTARY DISCUSSION CALLING ON ALL SIDES TO MAKE EFFORT TOWARD SPIRITUAL UNITY IN HISTORIC MISSION OF FORMULATING CONSTITUTION AND TO MAKE APPROPRIATE MUTUAL CONCESSIONS.

4. IN PLENARY DEBATE JANUARY 8 OPPOSITION LEADERS PRECEDING PM CARAMANLIS RESTATED THEIR CRITICISMS OF DRAFT CHARTER (ATHENS 9123), 91685. MAVROS OBJECTED TO TIME-LIMITS ON PARLIAMENT'S REVIEW OF DRAFT AND SUGGESTED ELECTION OF PRESIDENT BY SIMPLE MAJORITY OF DEPUTIES. PASOK'S PAPANDREOU DESCRIBED NEW DRAFT AS "TOTALITARIAN" WHILE EDA LEADER ILIOU DENIED NEED FOR REINFORCING EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY. CARAMANLIS TOOK ROSTRUM AND DECLARED HE WAS PARTICIPATING IN POLITICS SOLELY FROM SENSE OF NATIONAL DUTY AND WAS WITHOUT PERSONAL AMBITIONS. HE SAID GOVERNMENT DRAFT CONSTITUTION GRANTED FEWER POWERS TO HEAD OF STATE THAN 1952 CONSTITUTION AND THAT IN OTHER WESTERN DEMOCRACIES EXECUTIVE EXERCISED GREATER AUTHORITY. HE ADDED THAT PARLIAMENT ALONE RETAINED ESSENTIAL LEGISLATIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POWER. ATHENS NEWSPAPERS SEIZED PM'S REMARKS CONCERNING HIS PERSONAL AMBITION TO LAUNCH WHIRLWIND OF SPECULATION ON CARAMANLIS' ULTIMATE INTENTIONS. SPECULATION REFERRED TO ND DEPUTY C. TSATSOS' EARLIER STATEMENT THAT NO ONE COULD BE CERTAIN OF CARMANLIS' POLITICAL DESIRES AND CONCLUDED THAT ISSUE OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES WIDE OPEN. ONLY ANTI-CARAMANLIS ATHENS NEWS CONJECTURED THAT PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE JANUARY 8 INDICATED PM DOES NOT INTEND

TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT.

5. PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE TO STUDY DRAFT CHARTER WAS APPOINTED BY PRESIDENT OF PARLIAMENT PAPACONSTANTINOU LAST MONTH AND IS CHAIRED BY PM'S CLOSE ASSOCIATE CONSTANTINE TSATSOS, ACADEMICAN AND ND DEPUTY - AT - LARGE. COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF 37 DEPUTIES, MOST OF THOM ARE LAWYERS OR ARE REGARDED AS EXPERIENCED TO DEGREE ON CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS-- 25 ARE FROM NEW DEMOCRACY, 7 FROM CENTER UNION/NEW FORCES, 3 PASOK, 2 UNITED LEFT. NEW DEMOCRACY'S CONTINGENT INCLUDES MFA UNDER SECRETARY I. VARVITSOTIS, PROFESSOR D. NIANIAS D. PAPASPYROU AND E. KAFALOYIANNIS. CU/NF GROUP INCLUDES BOTH GEORGE MANGAKISES, N. PAPAOLITIS AND D. TSATSOS, NEPHEW TO CHAIRMAN. PASOK PUT FORWARD I. KOUTSOHERAS AND I SKOULARIKIS AND UNITED LEFT DELEGATION INCLUDES I. ILIOU.

6. FORMULATION OF NEW CONSTITUTION ENTERED SEMI-QUIESCENT STAGE JANUARY 9 WHEN IT REVERTED TO COMMITTEE FOR 40 DAYS FOR REVIEW AND AMENDMENT RECOMMENDATIONS. OPPOSITION HAS SHOWN LITTLE INCLINATION TO MODERATE OBJECTION TO PRESENT CONSTRUCTION OF PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITY. CARMANLIS' "CONCESSIONS" ON AMENDMENTS WERE MINOR EXCEPT FOR DIRECT RESPONSE TO CRITICS BY SHIFTING POSITION ON AGE REQUIREMENT FOR VOTERS AND REDUCING PARLIAMANTARY TERM.
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